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My name is Alison Shih and I serve as Counsel at Everytown for Gun Safety where I'm responsible for supporting state legislative efforts in Connecticut. Everytown is the largest gun violence prevention organization in the country, with more than 10 million supporters including moms, mayors, veterans, survivors, gun owners, and everyday Americans fighting for public safety measures that can help save lives. I want to thank you all for allowing me to testify in support of HB No. 6667 and HB No. 6816.

We commend the legislature and the Governor for advancing concrete, evidence-based solutions to address gun violence. We know that gun violence takes many forms and has many root causes. And because of this, there is no one single policy solution that can end the violence. That's why effective gun violence prevention policy must be comprehensive and multi-faceted, addressing both prevention and accountability.

HB No. 6667 includes many important provisions, including prohibiting open carry of firearms, strengthening dealer licensing and regulations, promoting responsible gun ownership through expanded firearm safety training, and helping to reduce firearm suicides by requiring a waiting period for firearm purchases. We support HB No. 6667 and are grateful that these important policies are being considered in your legislative process and urge you to support this lifesaving legislation.

I want to strongly urge your support for HB No. 6816, and in particular its provisions which will eventually require all new semi-automatic pistols sold in Connecticut to be equipped with microstamping technology. I want to start with why this is important. Microstamping is a simple, proven, inexpensive technology that would help police solve crimes by making it easy for them to connect shell casings found at crime scenes directly to the pistol that fired them. By failing to integrate microstamping technology as a standard feature in semi-automatic pistols, despite admitting in court filings that it is feasible to do so, the gun industry is denying law enforcement a critical new tool it needs to solve more gun crimes, giving closure to victims and communities, and bringing those who commit guns crimes to justice.

When a gun is not physically recovered at a crime scene, law enforcement's best hope of identifying the weapon and identifying suspects responsible for the crime is to trace the shell casings recovered from the scene. Without microstamping technology, law enforcement must rely on outdated ballistics examination and matching tools. These existing technologies have proven woefully inadequate. Investigators receive successful traces from bullet and cartridge evidence entered into the National Integrated Ballistics Information Network only 1.5% of the time. The lack of actionable evidence is partly responsible for the woefully low clearance rates for shootings and firearm homicides.¹ Ultimately, this hinders law enforcement officers' efforts to identify and bring those who commit violent crimes to justice.

¹ The same under-resourced communities of color that experience daily gun violence are also disproportionately burdened by unsolved homicide cases. An analysis of homicide reports and FBI homicide data from 55 major cities from 2007 to 2017 found that more than half of homicides go unsolved. A separate analysis of clearance rates in cities found that police made arrests in only 35% of firearm homicides and 21% of firearm assaults when the victim was Black, while these rates were 18 and 16 percentage points higher when the victim was white. The vast majority of non-fatal shootings remain unsolved, especially in Black and Brown communities.



This bill would dramatically change that, making Connecticut a national leader in bringing this technology to market and in providing this critical new tool to law enforcement, and help them solve gun crimes, prevent future acts of gun violence, and identify and apprehend gun traffickers. The bill is written to create market pressure that would encourage the gun industry to incorporate the technology into its newly-manufactured semi-automatic pistols before they are shipped to firearm dealers or purchasers in Connecticut. However, if the industry continues their years-long blockade of this and other common-sense safety features and refuses to incorporate the technology, the bill would create alternative methods for dealers or gunsmiths to ensure that these pistols are microstamp-enabled before they're sold in the state. The bill would establish a system for firearms dealers, gunsmiths, and other private entities to obtain a license to create and service microstamping-enabled pistols and components. It would also ensure that the Connecticut State Police is prepared to help integrate this crime-solving technology into semi-automatic pistols sold in Connecticut, either directly or in partnership with private companies, who are standing at the ready to provide the service.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify in support of this important legislation. I am grateful for your continued work to keep Connecticut at the forefront of innovative, thoughtful gun violence prevention policy.

Sincerely,

Alison Shih
Counsel
Everytown for Gun Safety